

PRODUCT CLOSE-UP



The Rogers *XL5 Londoner* is part of the *XP-8* Series. All shells are eight-ply rock maple (the snare is 10-ply), with each ply of equal thickness. Each shell receives seven coats of lacquer during the construction process. Components are: 18 x 22 bass drum, 12 x 12 and 13 x 13 tom-toms, 16 x 16 floor tom, and 8 x 14 snare drum plus hardware package.

Bass Drum

The 18 x 22 bass drum has 20 lugs and has key rods instead of T-handle tensioners on both playing and audience sides. Its hoops are maple, and a single venthole is located on the side of the shell. Two felt damper strips are included for the drum.

Rogers uses large satin-finished steel tubing for their spurs, which pass through the shell. One end has the usual rubber tip, while the other end (inside the drum) is capped flat. The spurs utilize Rogers' famed *Memri-Lok* system to keep themselves in place, along with a small T-screw. *Memri-Lok* started the rage on positioning locks. Basically, *Memri-Lok* is a steel ring, set with a drumkey, that surrounds a height tube, spur leg, tom-tom leg, etc. The ring interlocks with a recess on the joint or bracket, and allows position to be locked in securely with no twisting or turning. I have always thought Rogers' spurs to have an imposing look due to their bulky size, but they do hold position quite well when playing.

Inside the bass drum is a shell-support tube, spanning the drum's height. This tube interfaces with the tom-tom holder, and besides giving the shell more structural strength, makes a great place to wedge

padding material behind.

The drum is fitted with a transparent front head, and a *Power Dot* batter (a C.S. head with a *white dot*). Truly a "power" bass drum, it is loud and full, and has the projection to cut through. From the factory, the sound approached a *concert* bass drum, but a little padding tightened the sound right up.

Mounting System

Rogers' tom holder utilizes a single satin-finished down post, which, as I said, fits inside the bass drum's support tube. The post locates through a large casting on the bass drum. A *Memri-Lok* ring locks in the post's position, along with a small T-screw. Atop the post is a large triangular casting which accepts the holder arms and locks them in place using drumkey-operated set screws. At all three locations, Rogers has inscribed numbered rings to serve as reference marks for setup. Surprisingly, there are no corresponding grooves on the arms to match up with the numbers. (By the way, the third hole is capped, but I suppose it could be used to fit another tom-tom arm, or cymbal post.)

The holder arms use large ratchets to adjust the angle of the toms. The arms pass through brackets on the drums which exactly resemble the holder's base plate. They are each set in place by a small T-screw, and use *Memri-Lok* fittings. Rogers has shortened their holder arms from 8" to 6", which reduces the amount of tubing inside the drums. They have also capped the ends of the arms to stop air flow. The holder is rock-solid, and has a good range of angle and height adjustments, even with the kit's large tom-toms.

Rogers XL5

Tom-Toms

The 12 x 12 and 13 x 13 toms have 12 lugs each; the 16 x 16 floor tom has 16 lugs. None of the drums have internal mufflers, but instead, are packaged with Rogers' *Super-X* mufflers. These round felt dampers clip onto the hoop, will swivel for different locations on the head, and are adjustable for degree of muffle (via a tiny wing screw). The *Super-Xs* do a nice job in cutting down annoying over-ring.

The floor tom has three lightweight tubular legs which locate into *Memri-Lok* brackets. Thanks to the locking system, there is no chance for sinking or twisting.

Power Dot heads are fitted on the batter sides, while transparent *Ambassadors* are used on the bottoms. Because of their square dimensions, these "larger-than-normal" drums sound big and powerful. *Pinstripe* batters might contain the sound better, but nevertheless, these are good rock 'n' roll drums.

Snare Drum

Included with this kit is an 8 x 14 wood-shell *Super Ten* snare drum. This drum has 20 lugs, a *Super-X* external muffler, 20-strand wire snares, and a simple cross-throw strainer with fine adjustment knob. Unlike the more complicated strainers of today, the *Super Ten* strainer is very efficient and very easy to set up. Fitted with a coated *Ambassador*, the *Super Ten* has just amazed me with its capabilities. It can go from delicate to fat sounding quite easily, and allows a wide range of dynamics. At only \$233 retail, I'd recommend checking this drum out if you're in the market for a deep snare. Rogers also offers wooden-shell *Dynasonic* snare drums, which have the innovative "floating" snares held in a metal frame. *Dynasonics* feature a more exacting snare sound—more orchestral in nature. They now have been fitted with brass lug-locks, and a nylon conversion kit for a gut-type sound has recently been made available.

Hardware

The new *R-380* line of hardware was with the *XL5* I tested—something which Rogers is very excited about. The entire line is imported and is quite powerful looking. The stands all have clamps that fit over the height joints to lock in desired

by Bob Saydowski, Jr.

Londoner Kit

height (which also means they have to be completely dismantled when packing up). Also, all height joints utilize inner nylon bushings.

The *R-380* cymbal stand has a double-braced tripod base and two adjustable height tiers. The tilter is a spring-loaded concealed ratchet. The *R-380* boom stand is also double-braced with one adjustable tier, and an extremely long telescopic boom arm. Both stands are well balanced and sturdy.

The snare stand has a double-braced tripod as well, and uses the common basket design with carriage-ring grip adjustment. Angle is adjusted with a concealed ratchet. The base folds from the bottom, which may make things difficult if you're cramped for space. Nonetheless, the stand works well and will comfortably seat the 8" snare with no worry of tipping over.

Rogers' *R-380* bass drum pedal has a split chromed footboard with adjustable toe stop, and a single expansion spring stretched upward. Beater angle is set by two drumkey operated screws, which in turn, adjust the footboard angle. (This could be compensated for by using a different length strap.) There are two sprung spurs at the pedal's base, and a synthetic strap is used for linkage. The pedal's clamping system uses a long threaded T-screw set off to the side of the frame which raises or lowers the clamp plate—one of my favorite methods, since you can mount the pedal without getting down on your hands and knees!

This pedal has good action with a pretty natural feel, and is virtually noise free, except for one small problem: The connecting rods from the footboard do not fit tightly into their frame holes, thus making them clatter around when played. All in all, though, the pedal is pleasing to play.

The hi-hat stand has a double-braced tripod like the others. It has a sandblasted split footboard with adjustable toe stop, sprung spurs, and a chain linkage. Double external compression springs are used for tension, and they are adjustable at the tops of their cylinder housings. I found the *R-380* hi-hat to be smooth and quiet.

Cosmetics

Rogers offers five finishes for their *XP-8* kits: white, silver, black, midnight blue,

and natural maple. I saw the maple finish, and was impressed with the overall quality and workmanship on both interior and exterior. The kit tested here retails at \$1,795 (\$1,654 for covered shells). Rogers still offers the *Memri-Lok* hardware line (which would be an extra \$85), but the new *R-380* hardware package is as good, if not better. The line can easily compete with other pro hardware, and yet is affordable. Rogers has not increased their prices much at all for the longest time, and in these times, I think that's pretty remarkable. Rogers has other kits, of course, in standard sizes, but the *XL5 Londoner* kit is a great high-volume rock drumkit.

MD readers with suggestions for "Product Close-Ups" are invited to correspond with Bob Saydowski, c/o Modern Drummer Magazine, 1000 Clifton Avenue, Clifton, NJ07013.

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